



Title: Insights from the First NUGSE Graduates

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Insights from the First NUGSE Graduates

AIDANA SIRGEBAYEVA

By 2013, Nazarbayev University was getting more popular among Kazakhstani school graduates and students. But this year was prominent for the big news which introduced a graduate program launched at the Graduate School of Education with an unfamiliar master's program in Educational Leadership. Many applicants were attracted to the program, but were scared at the same time. Firstly, this program was developed by two world giants in education: University of Cambridge and University of Pennsylvania. Secondly, the high admission requirements and course structure were incomparable to other Kazakhstani Higher Education Institutions. On the other hand, it was a pilot program in terms of risk people should have taken by making a decision to enter into master's study. However, this risk paid off by the successful study and graduation of students, which shows the success of the program as a whole. Actions speak louder than words, so let us shed light on the product of the first GSE graduates, where they are and what they have gained from their curious journey called Master of Educational Leadership.

Aliya Sergaliyeva, *Teacher of Global Perspectives and Project Work, Nazarbayev Intellectual School*

NUGSE is one of my right choices in life. I have gained many things and many friends thanks to my study. In particular, critical analysis and time management are the most crucial skills I gained. I used to manage my own time on a quite good level before studying at NUGSE, but the atmosphere within the school helped me to develop a regular time management routine, which helps me throughout my work. Now, I can allocate it to study and leisure time activities accordingly. Studying at NUGSE influenced my professional life also in terms of developing theoretical and practical sense of research. Research is also an influential part of the teaching profession, and in this sense my studying experience was a decisive step in reconsidering my opportunities as a teacher. Based on the knowledge of research procedures, a teacher can act as a facilitator in the learning process instead of being an instructor or guide.

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Overall, the program was extremely useful in terms of getting the necessary background knowledge in the field of education, and as a teacher that amount of information was quite valuable. Being the first means being the pioneer in the field, and after my graduation I have relied on a lot on the lessons of my master's course education, particularly by applying the actual knowledge and skills I gained.

The most significant recommendation for current students and applicants would be to develop their self-study skills and techniques; they will help them to study now and for further studies or research fellowships. Among them, time management should be a major aim to be succeeded during the studies.

Olessya Akimenko, *Head Teacher and Co-Founder, Language School*

Being a pioneer is a hard but honorable job.

I work as a Head Teacher of the language school I co-founded with my spouse after graduating from NUGSE. Studying at NUGSE gave me quite good research skills, as well as the experience to independently conduct empirical research. I also learned a great deal about writing articles and papers for scientific studies and became more confident in my academic writing skills. It also significantly influenced my professional life,

because now I can proudly state that I graduated from Nazarbayev University. Also, now I have more opportunities regarding studying for PhD, as I have a good research background for this. To be the first cohort alumni of NUGSE was pretty intense, but exhilarating at the same time—being a pioneer is a hard but honorable job.

My recommendations for current students will be:

- improve your writing skills by reading the articles and research papers;
- practice with paraphrases (it will be useful for your papers);
- get a tutor and a thesis supervisor who is experienced in your research field;
- use time-management; do not postpone until the last moment!

Aidana Sirgebayeva, *Academic Activities Manager, Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education*

NUGSE has played a crucial role in my self-development and professional career. An intensive full-time study brought on the harsh reality of strict deadlines instructed by valuable and western-educated professors. Definitely, thanks to this study I have gained skills and abilities mainly on research capacity to add to the collective body of knowledge. One thing here to point out is the coherence of courses, each of which contributed to my final full thesis in its own way. For instance, Educational Reforms in Kazakhstan gave us a theoretical base on the official documents present in the country. Likewise, Academic English advanced the means of writing a research paper. Together, the skills acquired on my master's study has had an impact on my professional life as I am continuing to work in this sphere. In addition to those mentioned skills, NUGSE has also helped me develop my ability of searching for and reading scholarly articles. I believe it is a strong conceptual foundation for my future doctorate study.

These days, graduates of NU are competitive with Bolashak graduates in the job market.

My position feels like two sides of a coin, having graduating from NUGSE and working for it currently. Besides working with familiar people, there is no other similar phenomenon. I am now exploring the other hidden side which has provided us with all facilities for proper study here. Being aware of theoretical knowledge on types of management and leadership, it is impressive to watch and catch that notion in practice which the NU senior leadership team frequently demonstrates.

Being a first graduate is a thrilling experience. There was a big question as to what our qualification of educational management means and what type of work we can do. Statistically, a significant part of graduates have jobs in educational institutions with positions in middle management. These days, graduates of NU are competitive with Bolashak graduates in the job market, and make up a special category of job seekers.

My recommendation for current students and applicants is to be curious and motivated by your research interest. This is a key for a fruitful study and successful thesis submission. Good luck!